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SUBJECT: CHINESE ACADEMICS STILL CANNOT EXPLAIN ANTI-SATELLITE TEST, FEAR JAPAN-AUSTRALIA SECURITY DEAL

Classified By: Deputy Political Minister Counselor Robert Griffiths. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Chinese scholars still have no explanation for China's anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) test and claim that they do not have information about the test some two months after the launch, EAP/CM Director John Norris was told March 13. Chinese scholars have not yet received any information about the test and therefore have no basis to comment on its purpose or significance, according to Tao Wenzhao, Senior Fellow at the China Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of American Studies and a frequent Chinese media commentator. Norris noted that the Chinese government's poor response to international queries and the continued absence of any explanation for the launch have heightened concerns about the lack of transparency within the Chinese military. China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) scholar Yuan Peng said his institute would try to come out with an analysis of the test soon, perhaps as early as the end of the month.

¶2. (C) The scholars also told Norris that China views the Japan-Australia Security Agreement announced on March 13 with suspicion and concern. Consultations between Tokyo and Canberra are normal, but formation of a security alliance seems inconsistent with the spirit of Six-Party cooperation in Northeast Asia, said former diplomat and Senior Research Fellow at the MFA-affiliated China Institute of International Studies Shen Shishun. CASS' Tao said some in China see the announcement as the start of an Asia-Pacific NATO aimed at containing China. Such agreements are not necessary given the existence of the Six-Party Talks, the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum, he maintained.

¶3. (C) The United States sees stronger ties between Japan, China and others in the Asia-Pacific region as enhancing security, not detracting from it, said the DCM, who hosted the event. The DPRK nuclear test and missile launch caused security concerns across the region and it is reasonable for Japan to look to Australia and elsewhere to address these security concerns.

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